

Virginia Nuclear Energy Consortium Authority
Board Meeting
Thursday, March 23, 2017 | 10:00 AM
VCU East Engineering Hall I Room E3218 I Richmond, VA

Draft Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER:

The Virginia Nuclear Energy Consortium Authority (VNECA) Board meeting was called to order by Chairman Donald Hoffman at 10:00 AM.

The following VNECA Board Members were present: Bob Bailey, Regina Carter, Al Christopher, Tom Deponty, Colleen Deegan, Donald Hoffman, Ganapati Myneni, Woody Lawman, Pam Norris, Ted Raspiller, Tim Stuller, and Gary Tepper.

The following VNECA Board Members were absent: Bill Briscoe, David Christian, Srinath Ekkad, Maureen Matsen, Matthew Mulherin, and Mark Troutman.

The following VNECA staff was present: Chris McDonald, DMME.

The following non-members were present: Erica Gray (Sierra Club, Virginia Chapter) and David Martin (Martin Images News).

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING'S MINUTES:

Chairman Hoffman proposed adoption of the Meeting Minutes from the October 18, 2016 meeting. Bob Bailey moved for approval and was seconded by Tim Stuller. The Board unanimously approved the minutes.

OFFICER ELECTIONS:

Seeing as how four members terms on the Authority were slated to expire on June 30, 2017 and that there may be some movement among the other members, the Authority agreed to postpone electing a new slate of officers until after June 30.

COMMONWEALTH'S UPDATE:

Chris McDonald, Special Advisor for Energy Policy, provided an update to the Authority on the 2017 General Assembly Session. While he briefly touched on a number of energy efficiency, renewable energy, and environmental bills, McDonald in particular highlighted House Bill 2291, which authorized investor-owned utilities to petition the State Corporation Commission for approval of a rate adjustment clause for recovery of costs of systems or equipment upgrades, replacements, or other costs reasonably appropriate

incurred to extend the combined operating license for, or the operating life of, nuclear generation facilities. HB 2291 successfully passed both the House and Senate and ultimately was signed by the Governor on March 16, 2017. The legislation will go into effect July 1, 2017.

Mr. McDonald also provided a brief update on the status of the Executive Order 57 work group, noting that though there will be no more meetings or public hearings, public comments were being solicited until April 30, 2017. The Authority agreed to submit a copy of their Annual Report (and in particular highlight their recommendations). Mr. McDonald encouraged individual members to submit comments or recommendations should they feel so inclined.

CENTER FOR ADVANCED ENGINEERING AND RESEARCH (CAER) UPDATE:

Bob Bailey, Executive Director of the Center for Advanced Engineering and Research (CAER), provided Authority members a brief update on the status of CAER. Mr. Bailey noted that Liberty University was exploring plans to possibly purchase the CAER facility in an effort to expand their engineering school. Mr. Bailey assured members that these talks were very preliminary, but that none of the assets would be pulled back from or made unavailable to other Virginia universities. Moreover, Mr. Bailey explained, the organization would remain independent – Liberty is merely exploring the possibility of purchasing the building itself. The name CAER is used interchangeably with the building, but Mr. Bailey explained that the organization is in fact independent and will continue to remain so.

As talks progress and plans continue to formulate, Mr. Bailey will continue to provide information to the Authority. Mr. McDonald agreed to pass along updates via email to Authority members.

VIRGINIA NUCLEAR ENERGY CONSORTIUM UPDATE:

Marshall Cohen, Executive Director of the Virginia Nuclear Energy Consortium (VNEC), provided the Authority with an update on recent VNEC activities, future plans, and the Consortium's strategic priorities for 2017. Specifically, Mr. Cohen highlighted VNEC's presentations to the Executive Order 57 work group, VNEC's recent Energy Workforce and Education Pathways Conference, and VNEC's advocacy work for the Center for Advanced Engineering and Integrated Systems Test (CAER/IST). Copies of Mr. Cohen's presentation will be made available online.

FUTURE OF VNECA

Chairman Hoffman proposed discussion amongst VNECA Members about the appropriate role for the Authority going forward. From meetings staff had with individual Authority members in the lead-up to the full Authority meeting, and from the discussion had at the meeting itself, it was clear that there are a number of opportunities to grow and evolve VNECA.

First, the Authority agreed that they should work to become more public-facing. In other words, members recognized that there was a real opportunity for the Authority to become more of a forum for public presentations and participation. This is particularly so in two regards: First, the Authority can work to develop panels, events, etc. that focus on future nuclear technologies and the role Virginia can play. Members agreed to work to identify engaging speakers and representatives from these sectors and speak with them about future participation. There was widespread agreement that exploring topics on such technologies as small, modular reactors would be worthwhile to the Authority. Second, as 2017 is an election year in Virginia, there will be a great chance to engage with new lawmakers and work with the new administration to discuss the role that nuclear plays in Virginia. VNEC plans on possibly hosting candidate forums and agreed to keep Authority members in the loop.

Colleen Deegan proposed that the Authority work to engage and coordinate with other nuclear groups around Virginia, especially leveraging the local and young ANS chapters and identifying student groups to work with. Authority members agreed that this was a wise path forward as it will both increase Authority visibility and help develop a new generation of nuclear advocates.

Ganapati Myneni concurred with the notion of the Authority focusing more heavily on new technologies and new financing mechanisms. In particular, he advocated that the Authority look more closely at molten salt technologies and the progress being made in Asia. Chris McDonald also spoke of the need to improve upon communications and engagement between meetings. He agreed as staff to the Authority to begin sending out bi-monthly newsletter emails to members. These newsletters will include relevant news items, announcements from the members, and information on upcoming events. Members agreed to provide McDonald with updates from their businesses/schools/organizations, news items worth sharing, and any information about conferences they may be hosting or attending. The Board unanimously agreed with this plan.

THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION AND NUCLEAR ENERGY

David Blee, the Executive Director of the Nuclear Infrastructure Council (NIC), made a presentation to Authority members on the role nuclear energy will play – or should play – in the Trump Administration. Mr. Blee noted that this administration may be more supportive of nuclear energy than past administrations but also noted that the future of the nuclear industry lies outside the beltway. Copies of Mr. Blee's full presentation can be found online.

NEXT STEPS:

Mr. McDonald again reminded the Board that there were at least four seats on the Authority whose terms expire on June 30, 2017. Those interested in reapplying for their seat should do so online through the Secretary of the Commonwealth's website. Mr. McDonald noted that members will be hearing from the Secretary's office in the coming weeks or months, but he will also provide reminders.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Having concluded official business, Chairman Hoffman opened the meeting up for public comment. The Authority received comment from Erica Gray (Sierra Club, Virginia Chapter), who expressed strong opposition to expanded nuclear energy due to her concerns about cost, storage, and safety. Ms. Gray noted that she would like to receive the proposed Authority Newsletters as well, and Mr. McDonald agreed that he would ensure they were sent to her and would look into possibly posting them online.

ADJOURNMENT:

With no additional business left, Pam Norris moved to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Ganapati Myneni. The meeting adjourned at 12:05 PM.